

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

The following listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claim 1 (previously presented): An automatic sampler comprising:
a plurality of sample vessels; and
a needle for collecting liquid samples sequentially from the sample vessels, said needle containing a non-noble base metal and having an outer surface coated with a first coating material that has a chemical activity lower than a chemical activity of the base metal of said needle, wherein said first coating material includes a noble metal including platinum, a platinum group metal, or gold that is plated or deposited on said needle, and wherein a second coating material comprising a quartz thin film is formed on an inner surface of said needle by a chemical vapor deposition method.

Claim 2 (canceled)

Claim 3 (currently amended): An instrument comprising:
an automatic sampler including:
a plurality of sample vessels; and
a needle for collecting liquid samples sequentially from the sample vessels, said needle containing a non-noble base metal and having an outer surface and an inner surface, the inner surface defining a flow path for the liquid samples

collected from the sample vessels, wherein only the outer surface of the needle is coated with a coating material that has a chemical activity lower than a chemical activity of the non-noble base metal of said needle, wherein said coating material includes a synthetic resin coating including polyetheretherketone that is coated on said needle, and wherein the inner surface of the needle is defined by the non-noble base metal and is not coated,

wherein the instrument further comprises a liquid analysis apparatus for receiving the liquid samples collected by the needle.

Claims 4-15 (canceled)

Claim 16 (previously presented): The instrument according to Claim 3, further comprising: a rinsing means for rinsing the needle after collecting the liquid samples.

Claim 17 (canceled)

Claim 18 (new): An instrument comprising:

an automatic sampler including:

a plurality of sample vessels; and

a needle for collecting liquid samples sequentially from the sample vessels, said needle containing a non-noble base metal and having an outer surface and an inner surface, the inner surface defining a flow path for the liquid samples collected from the sample vessels, wherein only the outer surface of the needle is coated with a coating material that includes a synthetic resin coating including

polyetheretherketone, and wherein the inner surface of the needle is coated via a chemical vapor deposition method with either a metallic thin film or a thin film of high-purity quartz, and

wherein the instrument further comprises a liquid analysis apparatus for receiving the liquid samples collected by the needle.